

Georgia Department of Agriculture



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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Ag Commissioner Asks Georgians To Be Vigilant Against Exotic Newcastle Disease

ATLANTA – Commissioner of Agriculture Tommy Irvin is asking all bird owners, from large poultry producers to pet bird owners and dealers, to help keep a devastating and highly contagious disease out of Georgia.

Commissioner Irvin's request came shortly after the announcement that Exotic Newcastle Disease (END) had been found in a backyard chicken flock in Nevada. The disease was discovered in California last fall and has cost millions of dollars and virtually shut down much of that state's poultry industry.

"All poultry producers and bird breeders need to practice strict biosecurity measures to keep this disease out. There is no cure, so we must take every precaution. We're not allowing entry of any birds into Georgia that have been in southern California at any time since October 1st and will now be banning entry of birds from the affected parts of Nevada," said Irvin.

"All species of birds are susceptible," said Irvin. "This is a threat to pet bird breeders, pet bird owners, our poultry industry and possibly even wild birds."

Cash receipts from poultry and eggs in Georgia are in excess of \$2.8 billion annually, making the state the country's leading producer.

Clinical signs of END can vary, but include respiratory signs such as coughing and sneezing, nervous signs such as circling and paralysis, high mortality and decreased egg production. Anyone with birds that show signs of the disease or

may have been transported from California or Nevada is asked to contact the Georgia Department of Agriculture at 1-800-282-5852.

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